

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6538

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Early Learning & K-12 Education, January 28, 2008

**Title:** An act relating to improving reading instruction.

**Brief Description:** Creating programs to improve reading instruction.

**Sponsors:** Senators McAuliffe, Tom, Hobbs, Rasmussen, Kauffman, Kastama, Murray and Shin;  
by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/17/08 1/28/08 [DPS-WM, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6538 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; Eide, Hobbs, Kauffman, McDermott, Oemig, Rasmussen and Weinstein.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators King, Ranking Minority Member, Holmquist.

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) reports that after the spring 2007 administration of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), 9,384 students in the class of 2008 had not met the reading standard required to graduate from high school. In the class of 2009, 16,942 students had not met the standard.

Nine Educational Service Districts (ESDs) provide regional services to school districts, including administrative and fiscal services, technical assistance, and direct services to students. Last session, the Legislature added professional development services identified by statute or the budget to the list of ESD core services. The state allocates funds to ESDs for core services provided. Local school districts reimburse ESDs for some of the services provided.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute):** The Adolescent Reading Program is created. The purpose of the program is to develop and implement a comprehensive statewide program that provides teachers the tools, skills, and knowledge to successfully teach struggling

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adolescent students to read, including English language learners. The program consists of the following components:

School-based Assistance Program: OSPI will create a school-based assistance program that has three different levels of support depending on the number of students who have not met the reading standard on the WASL. Schools with larger numbers of students not meeting the reading standard will receive more intensive assistance while schools with smaller numbers of students not meeting the reading standard will receive a lower level of assistance. The schools in the two highest levels of assistance will receive assistance for three school years. Schools will be selected for the different levels of assistance by using criteria and a process developed by OSPI. The assistance may include training and instructional materials from research-based reading intervention programs, technical assistance on site, reading coaches, training on diagnostic assessments, and design information for school-wide reading systems.

The school-based assistance program will be implemented in high schools in the 2008-09 school year. The program will expand to include middle and junior high schools in the 2009-10 school year.

OSPI Coordination: OSPI will hire staff to provide statewide leadership, coordination, technical expertise, and logistics to successfully implement the program. OSPI must consider recommendations of an advisory panel with representatives from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds when choosing staff for the positions.

ESD Reading Specialists: Each ESD will hire a reading specialist, with two specialists hired in the Puget Sound ESD, to provide training and information to curriculum directors, principals, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other individuals who are assisting students to read. The specialists will be jointly selected by OSPI and the superintendent of ESD.

Joint Trainings: OSPI and ESD reading specialists will provide training for school district curriculum directors and other district personnel to address how to improve the teaching of reading.

Evaluation: If funds are appropriated for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the adolescent reading program then OSPI must contract with a third party to conduct the evaluation. The evaluation must include recommendations for making the program more effective. The evaluation must be submitted to the Legislature by December 1, 2010.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute):** Language is added to clarify that the students who will be assisted by the reading program includes students who are English language learners. When hiring staff at OSPI to provide statewide leadership, coordination, and technical expertise for the reading program, OSPI will consider recommendations by an advisory panel that will include representatives from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 10, 2008.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Increasing reading skills in our schools will increase our graduation rates. This bill will provide the needed support at the school level for schools to improve. I believe that our dropout rate is related to the fact that the students are unable to read. This bill will provide significant support and materials to assist us so we will not lose valuable assets to our communities. Programs like this should be funded through the Learning Assistance Programs. We should not need to have reading programs like this but it is only recently that there has been a focus on how to teach reading. We would not have as many students labeled as special education if we had reading intervention programs such as in this bill. Do not forget about training for paraeducators who assist students in the classrooms. Teaching reading is an incredibly complex process.

CON: Teaching reading is an incredibly complex process. One program cannot do it all. Each program should be flexible to address all the students who need help.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Paul Apostle, Principal, Renton High School; Christy Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition; Ehren Flyghre, Public School Employees; Craig A. Hughes, Central Washington University.

CON: Craig A. Hughes, Central Washington University.